

MASONRY IN MANITOBA

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BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

No man has a mind big enough, quick enough, open enough, to absorb and understand in an evening, even the introduction to what Freemasonry knows; not in a month of evenings. No degree, no matter how impressively delivered, can possibly take him far along this road. All that the E.A. degree can do is to point the way, and give the seeker sustenance by which he may travel.

And equally true it is that while men do receive the degrees of Freemasonry at the hands of their brethren, there is no Freemasonry in a man's heart if he is not willing to sacrifice some time, give some effort, some study, ask some questions, digest some philosophy, to make it truly his own.

The candidate is designated an Entered Apprentice because we have conferred the initiatory degree, in which he took a central part. No man however, can in reality be "Entered" unless he is willing to enter.

In the character of a candidate you were brought into a large place—a very large place—a universal brotherhood. Henceforth a pathway lies before you, and whether you will travel blindly or not, depends only and wholly upon you.

As a newly initiated craftsman you should ask yourself this question, "Have I become a real Freemason, or merely joined the Lodge as another member?"

An Entered Apprentice is barely born, Masonically. He must learn and learn well, if he is to enter into his heritage. That which is worth having is worth working for. Experience in life teaches that what comes without labour turns soon to ashes in the mouth. Without labour there can be no rest; without work there can be no vacation; without pain there can be no pleasure; without sorrow there is no joy.

You have crossed the threshold of a very old and very ancient craft. What you do in the future, and how well you learn the lessons taught you as an Entered Apprentice, will be the yardstick by which your craftsmanship is measured.

In your Lodge you will find faithful brethren ready and willing to help you, on your journey. In your Masonic Library you will find a literature replete with the story of Freemasonry, and these books may be borrowed simply by asking for them.

These observations have been prepared, from one of our Library books written by Carl H. Claudy, and most of his writings can be found on the shelves in the Library.

ORIGIN OF GRAND LODGES

At the present time all recognized Freemasonry is governed by Grand Lodge Jurisdictions, each of which is a complete, independent, Masonic Sovereignty. This is a wholly new form of government in the sense that it was unknown to Masonry before 1717.

The oldest Grand Lodge now in existence was created in 1717 by the voluntary affiliation of four local Lodges in London, England. Arbitrarily they assumed jurisdiction over all Freemasonry within ten miles of London, but gradually that Grand Lodge came to be recognized as the supreme Masonic authority throughout all England. In much the same way the Grand Lodge of Ireland was probably formed by 1725, The Grand Lodge of Scotland was organized in 1736. Each of these Grand Lodges became supreme throughout its entire country.

An entirely different method of creating Grand Lodges prevailed in many of the early American colonies. On April 13th, 1733, Henry Price of Boston received a commission from the Grand Master of England to organize Freemasonry on the American continent, and he became Provincial Grand Master for New England, and shortly thereafter for all North America, with authority to form a Grand Lodge, and constitute Lodges "in these parts."

He exercised his authority extensively, beginning with the Grand Lodge in Massachusetts, and what is now St. John's Lodge, both being organized by him on July 30th, 1733. He and his Massachusetts successors established local Lodges all along the Atlantic seaboard. Between 1733 and 1792 inclusive, seventy-six such Lodges were organized; among this number were three in Nova Scotia, one in Quebec City, and one in Newfoundland. The original Lodge in Canada was "Annapolis Royal" in the town of that name, and the charter was issued in 1738.

Just as Freemasonry on this continent spread from Massachusetts, so likewise it kept spreading from the British Isles, from colony to colony, and from state to state, but all duly constituted

Ancient Craft Freemasonry was derived in the first instance from the Grand Lodges of England, Ireland, or Scotland.

While Grand Lodges have been organized since 1717, as we have explained, it must be realized that Masonic Lodges were in active existence long before that time, and Grand Lodges as we know them today, were originally created by existing Craft Lodges.

Here in Manitoba our own Grand Lodge was created in 1875, but Freemasonry had been in existence and Lodges had flourished in the district from the year 1864.

MASONRY IN THE COMMUNITY

The responsibility of a Freemason to his immediate community is more than an abstract theory. One hesitates to speak of the impact of the Craft outside the borders of his own restricted area, and yet we can trace very definitely a community aspect from the early days of Speculative Masonry. And surely we do not doubt that our operative brethren were an important section of the community in the long ago.

Our ancient charges and regulations give us solid ground for our wider activity. The call for obedience to the moral law surely suggests a responsibility beyond the localized area of a tyled Lodge-room. How else can we interpret the phrase "being a centre of union between all good men and true, and the happy means of conciliating a real friendship.

Then we are enjoined to be obedient to our national life and national ideals, and conformity to the lawful authority is an essential requisite. We are enjoined to promote peace, cultivate harmony, and live in concord and brotherly love. From time immemorial Freemasons have been charged to uphold the interest of the community and zealously promote the prosperity of their country.

These injunctions are woven into the fabric of our Craft and there is no limitation as to the extent of the circle, because it embraces "all men."

Our ancient Craft has taught good citizenship to its votaries from the misty past, and its teachings are unchanged at the present time.

The term "Community" in a Masonic sense has reference to more than town or city, province or country—surely we should interpret the meaning in universal terms. But our immediate field of activity is that which is close at hand.

The practice of Masonic Principles in our respective stations; in business, in Church life, in municipal and national affairs, should be the aim of the Mason who strives to bring about a universal brotherhood.

If, as we claim, only men who are moral and upright, and of good repute before the world, are accepted, and do comprise the membership of our Lodges, then a practical realization of the Masonic Ideal, would seem to be a possibility in the wider field we call the community.

Let us be guided by realities, and not be misled by words. Let us discount what men are saying, and make our decisions from what men are doing. Moral progress in our Community life will not be accomplished by vocal effort.

If Brotherhood be our goal, if in proportion to our understanding of the meaning of brotherhood, we act in conformity thereto, then we shall be working for human unity.

If in your community you will be a good citizen, you will be tolerant, you will break down racial antipathies, religious differences, and class hatreds. You will then be living brotherhood; you will be more than a Lodge member, you will in truth be a Freemason.

The spirit of Freemasonry has always existed. Our principles are expounded to the ends of the earth. Our field of action is among our friends, our neighbours in the community. Freemasonry embodies the solution of the age-long problem of relationship between man and man—not only between Mason and Mason, and if we can carry our message into the wider sphere, then indeed shall the Masonic Lodge be the greatest contributor to peace and goodwill upon earth.

WORKING OUTSIDE

We have been told on many occasions that true Masonic work can be and should be, carried beyond the four walls of a Lodge room.

It has been a pleasure to carry the stories of community effort in our columns, and we are always on the alert for some real contribution along these lines.

This is the story of a picnic—When we speak about picnics, our thoughts naturally turn to the young tots or youngsters in the adolescent stage of life. In this case our picnic is centred around

thirty-six old timers whose combined ages totalled 1965 years, the youngest was 70, and the oldest 93½ years young. On Sunday 10th August the brethren of Prince Arthur Lodge No. 105, meeting at Swan River, gathered this precious cargo together and had it transported by car and bus to Lake Madge, fifty miles distant. This Lake is located in Duck Mountain Provincial Park, and lies just across the Provincial boundary here and is in Saskatchewan.

The outing has been established as an annual affair, and was inaugurated by the Masons of Swan River four years ago; and it has been carried on by them each year since. It has become an Event in the lives of the old people, and each year the picnic grows bigger and better.

The guests of Prince Arthur Lodge on these happy occasions, are the Old Age Pensioners of Swan River, and the adjoining district. Few of these old folk would have the pleasure of even this one day at the lake away from home, but for the Masonic picnic.

They have an enjoyable time at their outing. All along the way to the Lake they sing at the pitch of their voices, while on the homeward trip they do their utmost to repeat the program, but long before their destination is reached, most of them have gone to the Land of Nod. They spend the day swapping yarns of days that have long since gone—a few venture a sail on the lake, where boats are provided for their enjoyment. A short devotional service is held on the lake shore, where is a minimum of speaking with a maximum of singing; and don't they like the old familiar hymns. Worshipful Brother E. L. Cottingham was in charge of the service this year.

To the brethren of Prince Arthur Lodge we sincerely extend our "Well Done." They have truly given us a practical demonstration of Freemasonry in the community, and their example could be emulated in other places.

What they are doing is real Freemasonry. Long may they continue to serve the Old Age Pensioners in the Swan River District.

OUR HISTORIC BACKGROUND

Some years ago Grand Lodge published a book telling the story of the introduction of Freemasonry to the Province. Would you like to possess a copy?

Members can add this book to their personal library by sending a money order for two dollars (\$2.00) payable to the Grand Lodge of Manitoba, and addressing their request to the Librarian, Masonic Temple, Winnipeg.

A limited supply is available, and members interested in obtaining a copy should send an order without delay.

DISTRICT MEETINGS

The month of October will be a busy season with the Lodges in different section of the province because five District Meetings will be held as indicated below.

1st October—	Second District	at Austin
2nd “	—Fourth “	at Manitou
8th “	—Sixth “	at Melita
9th “	—Seventh “	at Virden
22nd “	—Eighth “	at Dominion City

Let us once again impress upon the membership at large that District Meetings are not confined to Past Masters, Worshipful Masters, and Lodge officers. Every brother in good standing is qualified to attend; and if he has a contribution to make to the subjects under discussion, then he should be doubly welcome. Frequently it is found that a meeting lacks something, and who knows but the brother who stays away may be the one who can provide that missing “something.” Here then is your opportunity to meet with the members of the neighbouring Lodges. True, a program with tentative time table is usually arranged in advance, but if there are problems and issues of general interest brought before the assembly, then opportunity will be given to open a discussion.

Here then is a forum, ready made, where advice, guidance and instruction, may be had for the asking.

To the younger members in the rural communities touched by the meetings enumerated above, we extend an invitation to come and take part. If you do nothing more than attend and listen, then you will gain in your Masonic experience.

Speaking from past experience, it has seemed evident that in some of our Lodges, a real effort is made to bring a good representation to the District meeting. On the other hand, elected officers have looked upon this meeting as just “another”—without taking the time to organize a proper delegation from their own Lodge. “Leave it to George” has no place on the calendar of an active Mason. Absenteeism never did contribute to the success of any endeavour, and it never will accomplish the goal of the Masonic Craftsman.

Make a date with yourself to attend your District meeting, and be sure to invite some others to join you on the trip.